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TAGS: PREL SP

SUBJECT: SPANISH MINISTER OF INTERIOR ON TFTP AND
GUANTANAMO DETAINEES

Classified By: Ambassador Alan D. Solomont, Reasons 1.4(b), (d).

¶1. (C) The Ambassador spoke February 11, 2010, with Spanish Minister of Interior Rubalcaba about the defeat of the TFTP interim agreement in the European Parliament. Rubalcaba, who spoke to the parliament February 10 in an effort to save the interim agreement, twice described the parliamentarians to the Ambassador as "insane." He said scores of parliamentarians spoke about "my data," "my privacy," or "my money" but no one spoke about "my security." Rubalcaba said privacy concerns certainly played their part in the negative outcome, but he also pointed to the parliament's desire to assert its new powers under the Lisbon treaty, regardless of the cost.

¶2. (C) Rubalcaba stressed that the interim agreement was a good one and that the cooperation it facilitated was very important to European security. He said the GOS and he personally want to collaborate with the U.S. on where we go from here. He mentioned he had already spoken to the EU Commissioner for Home Affairs about how to restart the process and get to a successful outcome. Rubalcaba emphasized the importance of getting an agreement in place. (After the vote President Zapatero told the press it was essential to get a new agreement because of its importance in the fight against terrorism.)

¶3. (C) The Ambassador also thanked Rubalcaba for Spain's willingness to accept a Palestinian detainee from Guantanamo (arrangements for his transfer are in the final stages). The Ambassador pressed Rubalcaba on the question of the Yemeni Spain had earlier agreed to take. Rubalcaba told the Ambassador Spain would be ready to move on the Yemeni next month. The Ambassador asked how Spain's review of three additional files was proceeding, and Rubalcaba said the Spanish interagency was still studying the files and would have an answer in "a few weeks."

¶4. (C) Comment: In the runup to the TFTP vote, the Ambassador spoke with the Secretary General of the Presidency, the First Vice-President, and Rubalcaba, stressing in each case the importance of the interim agreement. Rubalcaba's frustration at being unable to persuade the European Parliament to focus on security was palpable. He seemed equally serious about working with the U.S. to find a way forward. Washington policymakers might want to consider how Spain can help as we move ahead.

SOLOMONT